

NAT TURNER™



THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED GRAPHIC NOVEL

U.S. \$14.95
CAN. \$16.95
U.K. £6.99

T

HE STORY OF NAT TURNER AND

his slave rebellion—which began on August 21, 1831 in Southampton County, Virginia—is known among schoolchildren and adults. To some he is a hero—a symbol of Black resistance and a precursor to the civil rights movement; to others he is a monster, a murderer whose name is never uttered.

In *Nat Turner*, acclaimed author and illustrator Kyle Baker depicts the evils of slavery in this moving and historically accurate story of Nat Turner's slave rebellion. Told nearly wordless, every image resonates with the reader as his brutal story unfolds.

This graphic novel collects all four issues of Kyle Baker's critically acclaimed miniseries together for the first time in hardcover and paperback, now colored in duotone from the original digital files. The book also includes endnotes, and a new afterword by Baker.

NAT TURNER

PREFACE

I first learned the name Nat Turner as a child in school. In my American history textbook was one paragraph, which basically said that Nat Turner led a slave rebellion in 1831, and that it was a significant event.

Over the years I would encounter the name Nat Turner in various books. None of the entries was longer than a few sentences mentioning the name, the date, and that it was important.

I became curious: Who was this man who was important enough to be mentioned in *all* the history books, yet is never spoken about at length?

Most of history's great people and events are examined in novels, plays, film, even art. I can go to a bookstore and find dozens of books about Harriet Tubman, Abraham Lincoln, or George Washington Carver. I may find one about Nat Turner. I can rent dozens of films about the Civil War, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, and Jackie Robinson. But there are no Hollywood Nat Turner films.

While many battle sites of the Civil War have plaques, statues, and even gift shops, the sites of Turner's rebellion are unmarked.

Many of history's greatest people, including Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Malcolm X all cite Nat Turner as an inspiration. Talk about important! In fact, it was in Malcolm X's autobiography where I first read a longer narrative of the Turner Rebellion. Reading Malcolm X's description of Turner's story made me realize it was the perfect subject for a comic book.

Comic books/graphic novels are a visual medium, so it's most important for an artist to choose a subject with opportunities for compelling graphics. The Nat Turner story has lots of action and suspense, also a hero with superhuman abilities.

I often choose to write books on subjects I wish to know more about. I wanted to know how a person nobody wanted to talk about could be arguably one of the most important men in American history.

One thing that's always mystified me about slavery is this: If slaves were selected and bred for size and strength, slavemasters must very quickly have found themselves

outnumbered by their bigger, stronger slave population. How does a weaker minority dominate a physically superior majority?

In my research I learned that this is accomplished by destroying the slave's mind. More effective than whips and guns was the simple act of outlawing the teaching of slaves to read or to write.

Think I'm exaggerating? Nat Turner broke the law, learned to read and write, and the rest is history.

Turner was a lousy fighter, an inept swordsman, and most of the people he tried to kill didn't die by his hand. His sole strength was his superior brain. He became a leader of men because he had developed his mind by reading, which happened to be illegal. Coincidence?

We are fortunate today to live in a free country where access to books is unlimited. If a man in Nat Turner's circumstances was able to change history, imagine what you can do with the freedom you have today.

I originally chose to publish Nat Turner myself, rather than through the comic book publishers I usually work for (the two largest). I liked that one of my first books as an independent publisher would be about a self-freed slave. I knew nothing about publishing, having only worked as an artist before. In the tradition of my hero Nat Turner, I went out and found books about being a publisher. I learned how to start a business, get printing, and distribution. I found books about sales and marketing.

My self-published book ended up selling through two printings thanks to reviews in *Entertainment Weekly* and *The Washington Post*. It was so successful that one of my all-time favorite publishers, Harry N. Abrams, picked it up and published the lovely edition you are now holding.

That's just one example of what free access to reading has given me. You can do it, too. Did you know there are books about how to find a diamond mine? Think about it.

—Kyle Baker

and to have
pictures
yield
voice.

KYLE BAKER

**NAT
TURNER™**

~ ABRAMS, NEW YORK ~



a friend
✓



PREFACE

6

I. HOME

9

II. EDUCATION

59

III. FREEDOM

106

IV. TRIUMPH

187

BIBLIOGRAPHY

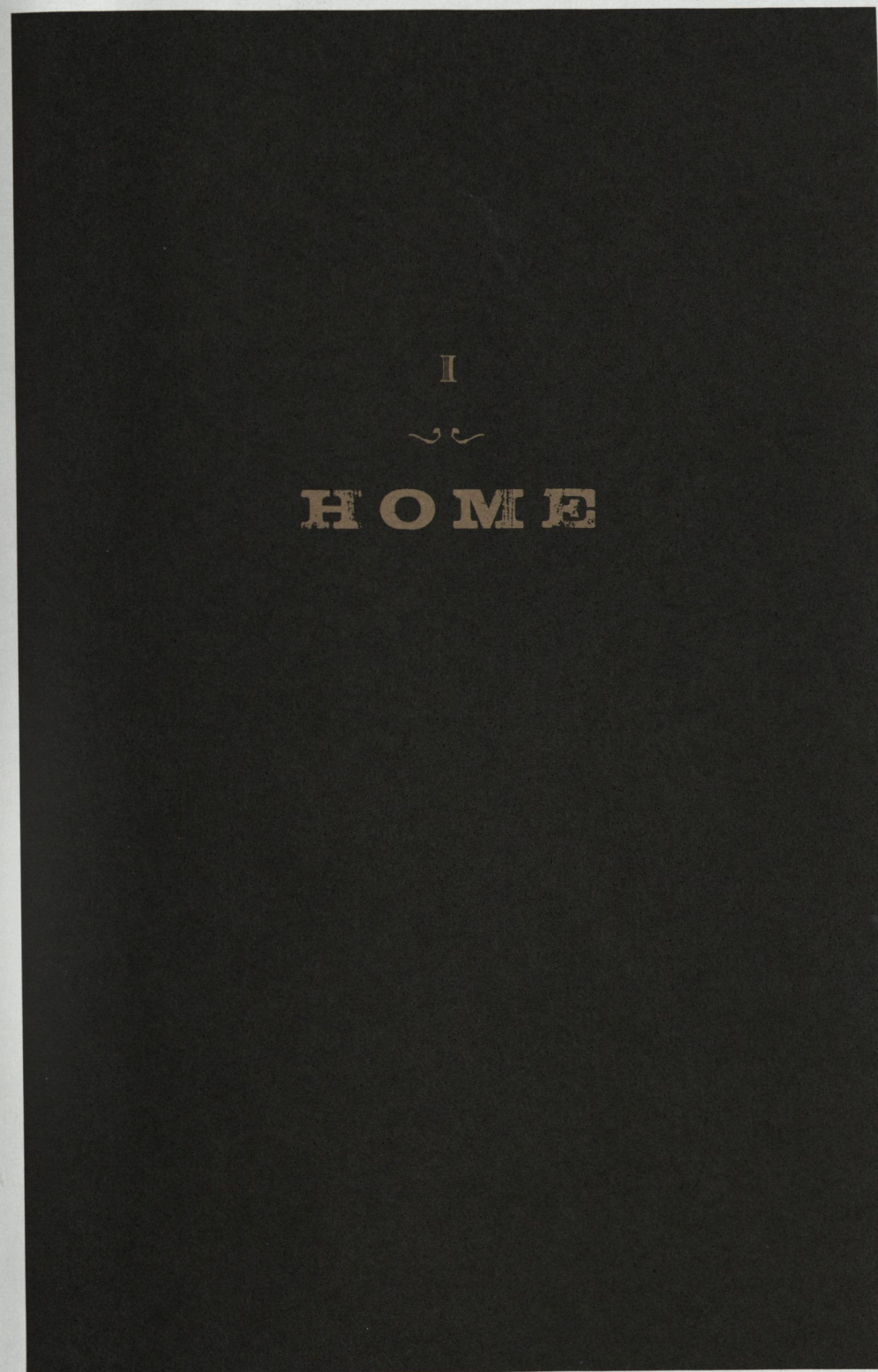
203

NOTES

204

THE CONFESSIONS
OF NAT TURNER

205



THE
CONFESSIONS
OF
NAT TURNER,
THE LEADER
OF
**THE LATE INSURRECTION
IN SOUTHAMPTON, VA.**

AS FULLY AND VOLUNTARILY MADE TO
THOMAS B. GRAY,

In the prison where he was confined, and acknowledged by him to be such
when read before the Court of Southampton: with the
certificate, under seal of the Court convened at
Jerusalem, Nov. 5, 1831, for his trial.

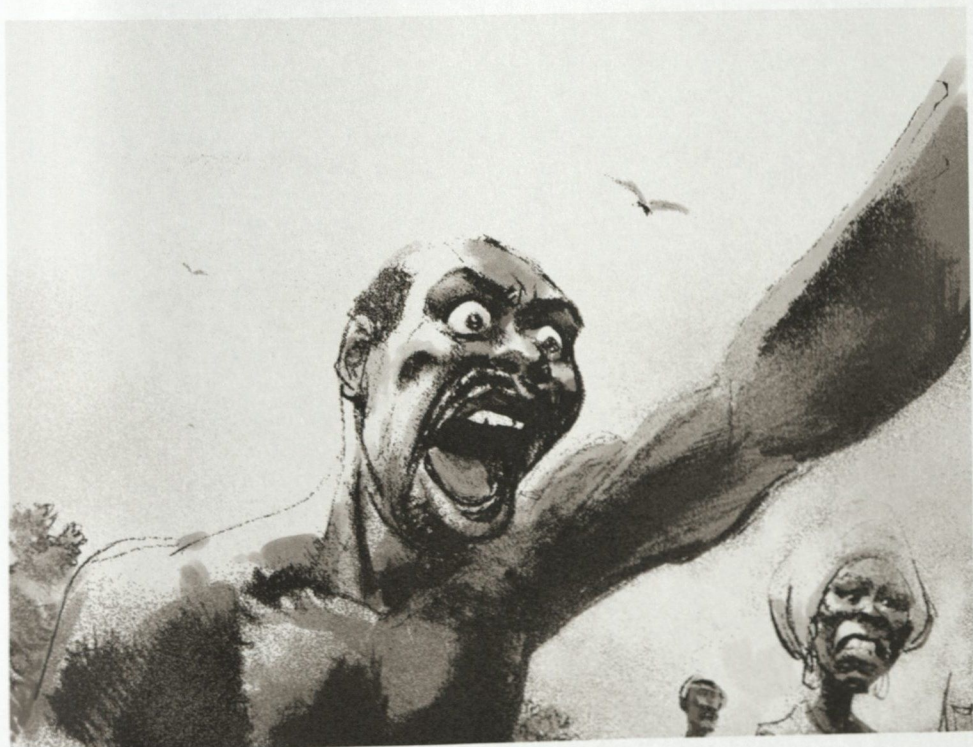
author's slip

ALSO,
AN AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT
OF THE
WHOLE INSURRECTION,
WITH
Lists of the Whites who were Murdered,
AND OF THE
*Negroes brought before the Court of Southampton,
and there sentenced, &c.*

What to include





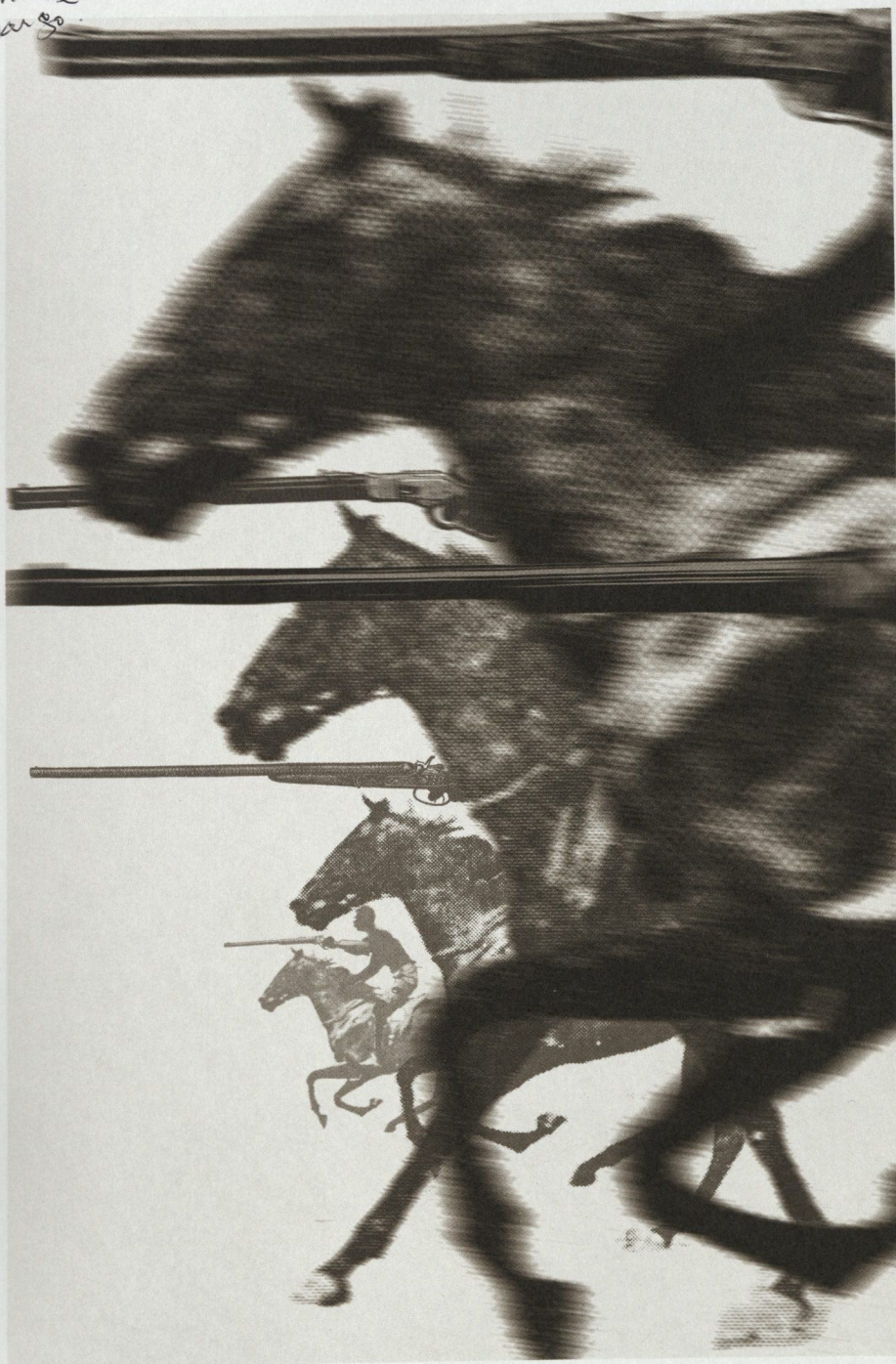


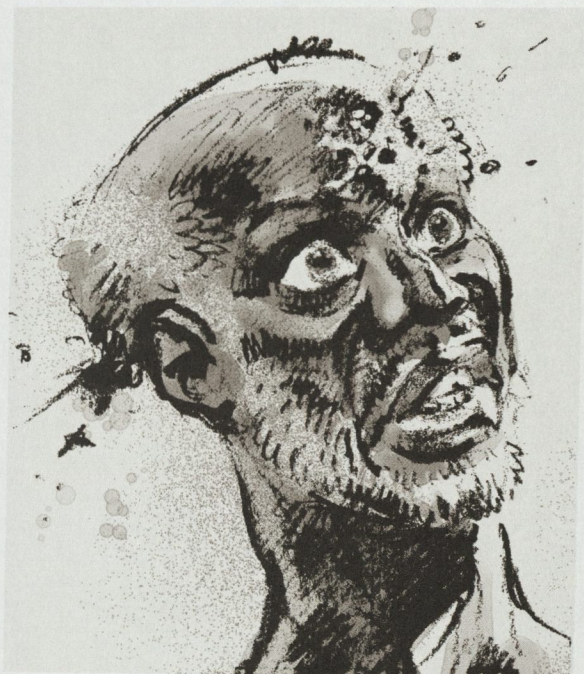


DOUGLASS

✿ Kyle Baker ✿

"horse"
Djao go











BOOM!

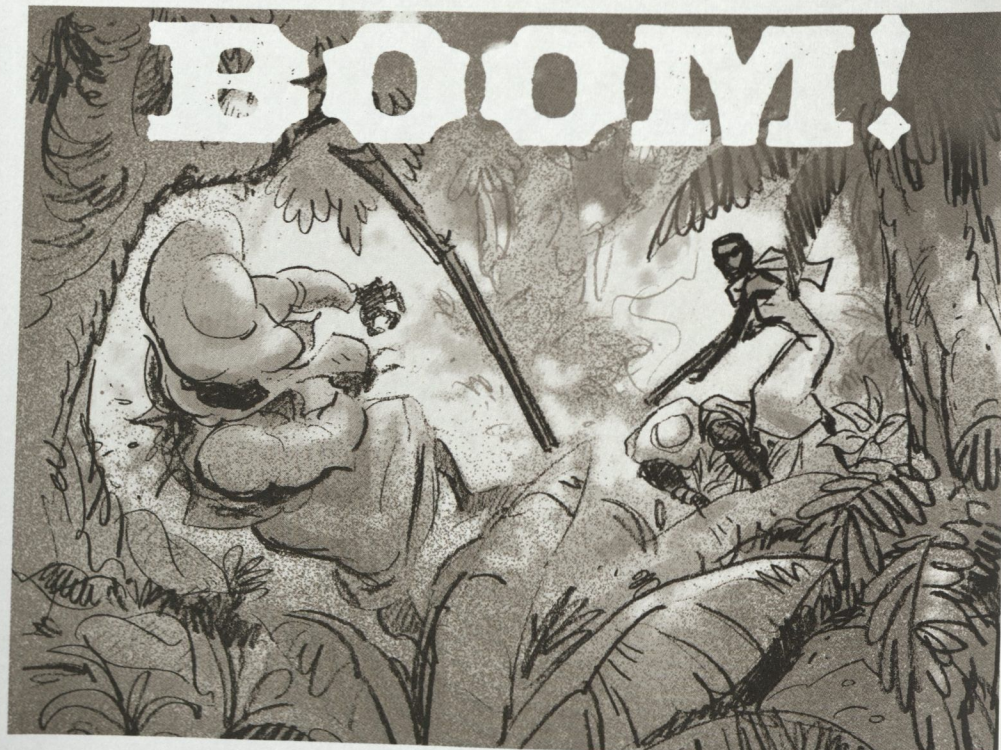




BOOM!

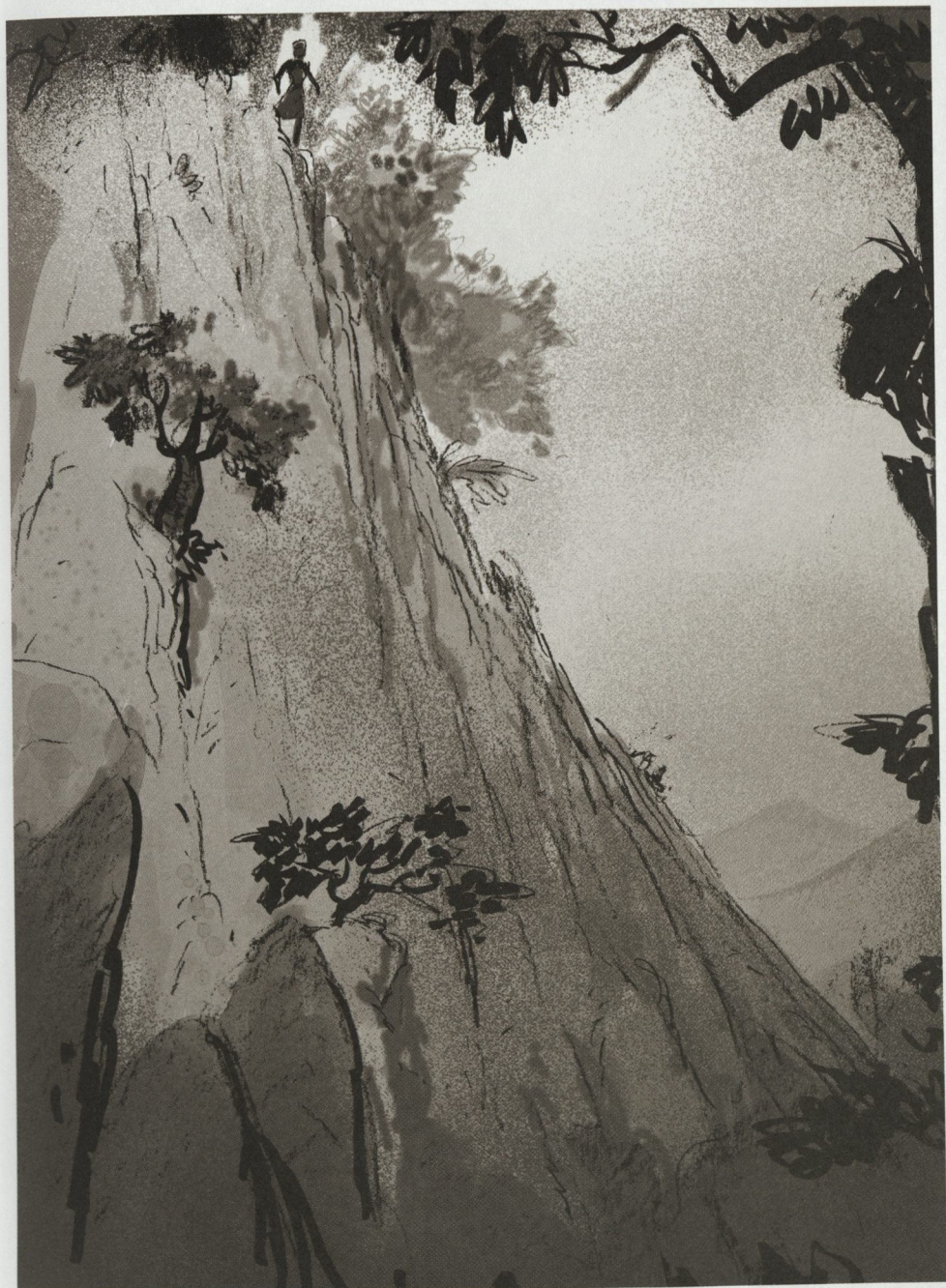


BOOM!





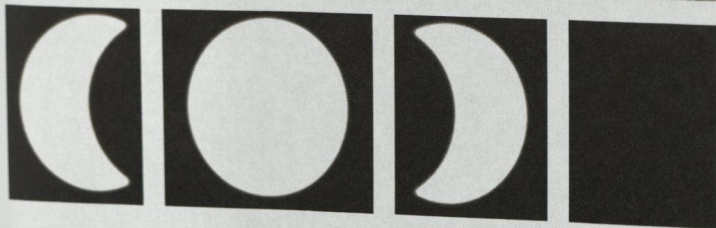


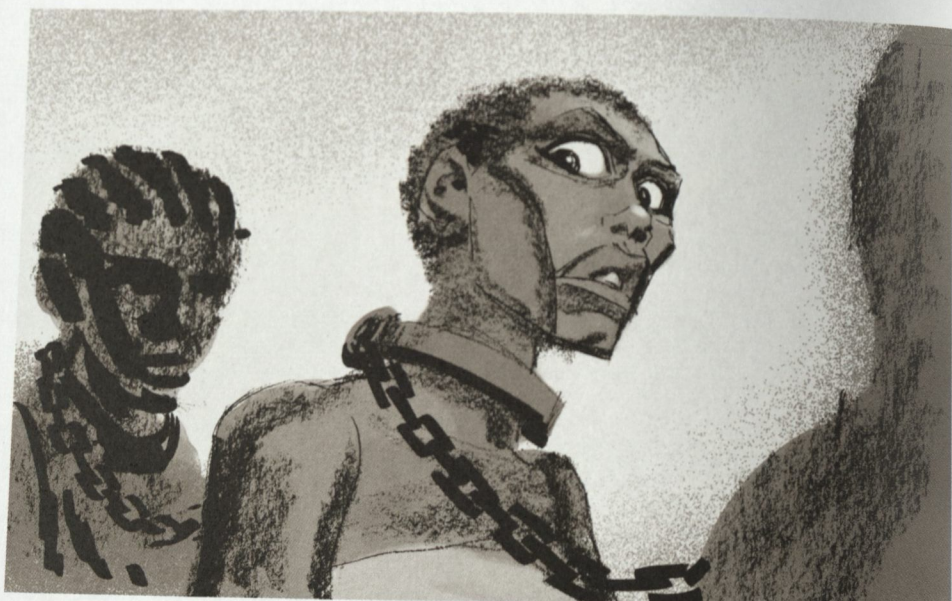








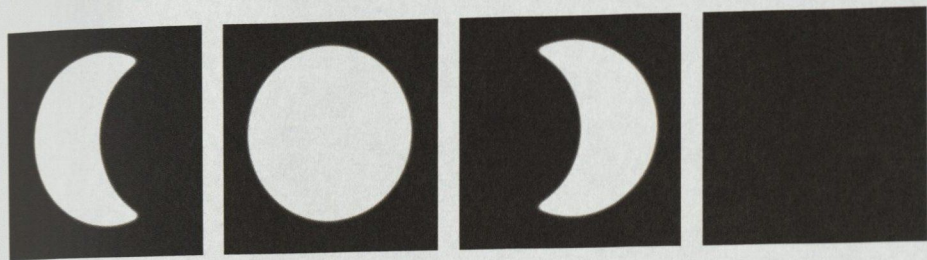








Spaul Taylor









**FROM THE MEMOIR OF CAPTAIN THEODORE CANOT:
 TWENTY YEARS OF AN AFRICAN SLAVER**

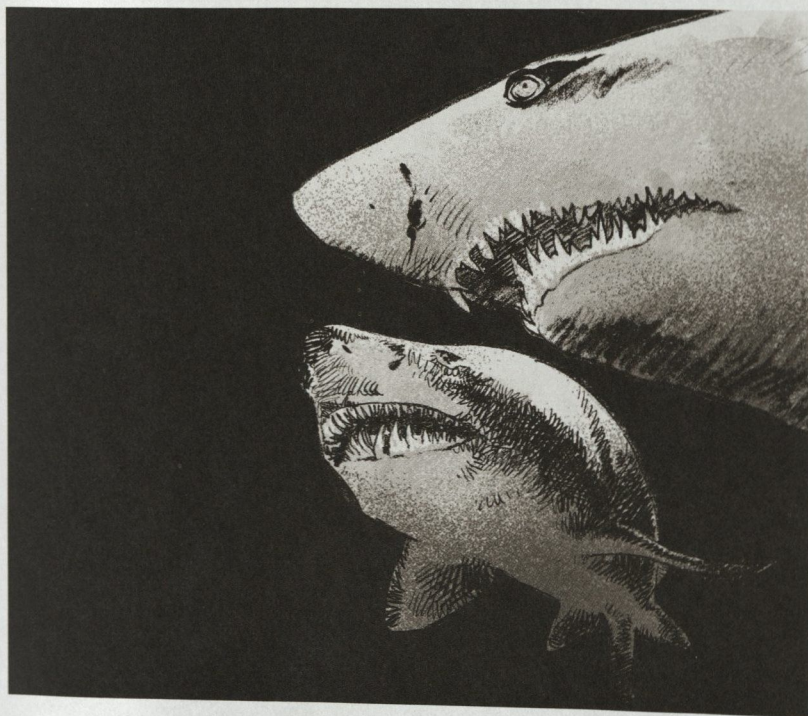
"The head of every male and female is neatly shaved; and, if the cargo belongs to several owners, each man's brand is impressed on the body of his respective negro.... They are entirely stripped, so that women as well as men go out of Africa as they came into it—naked."



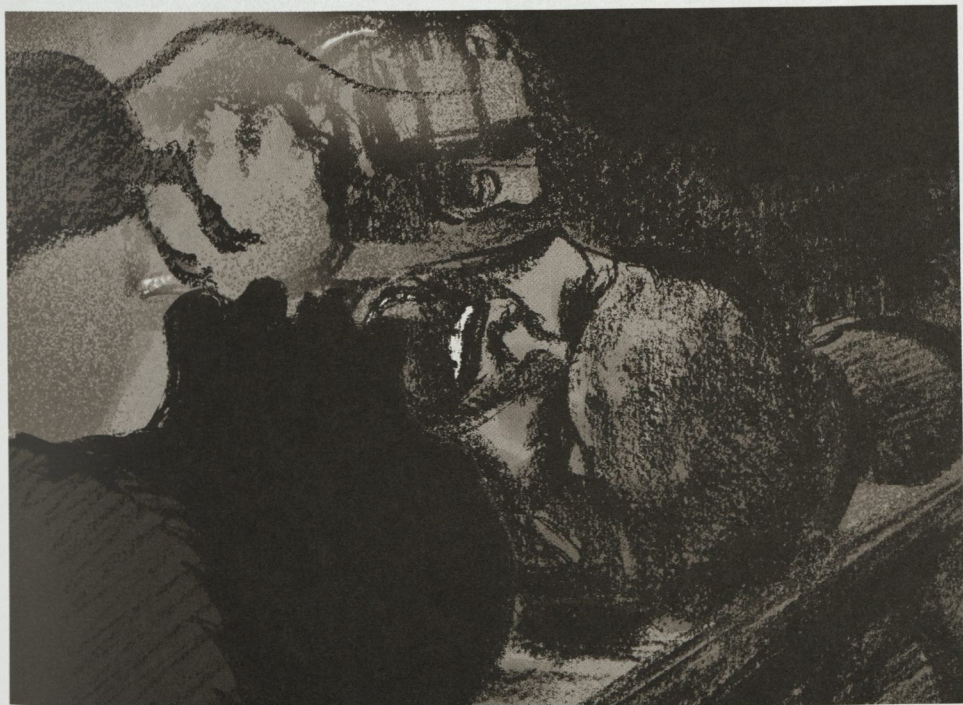






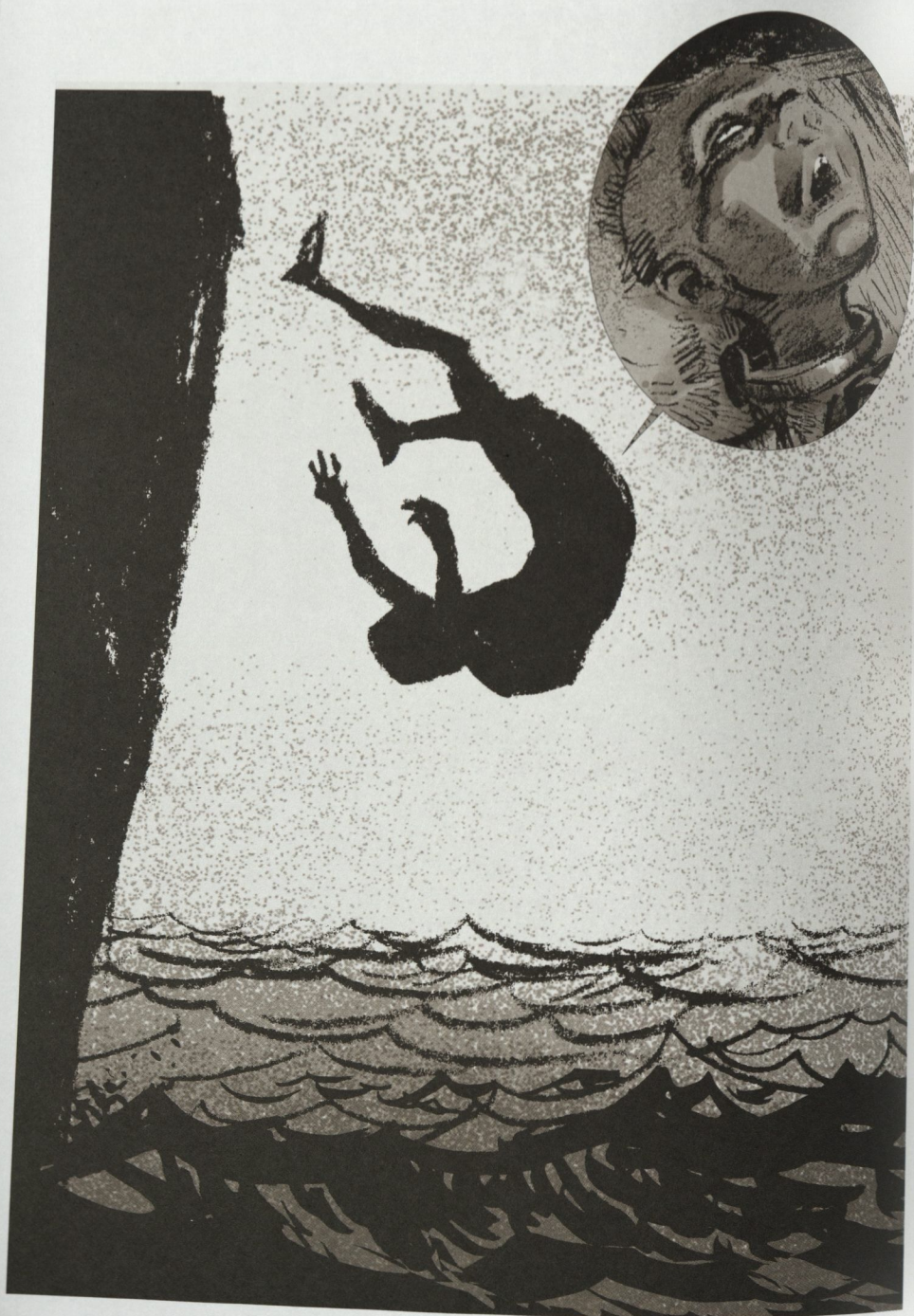












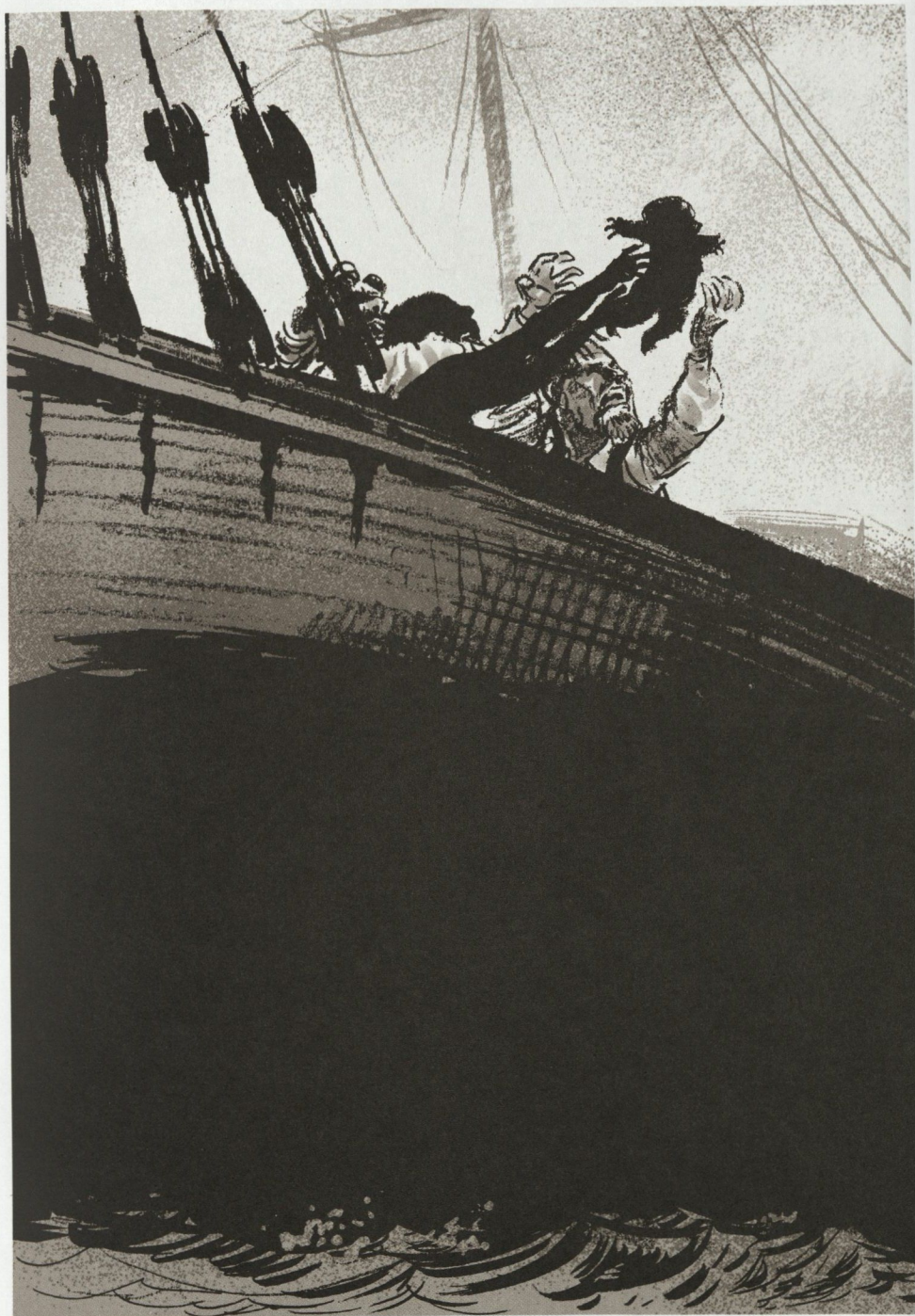




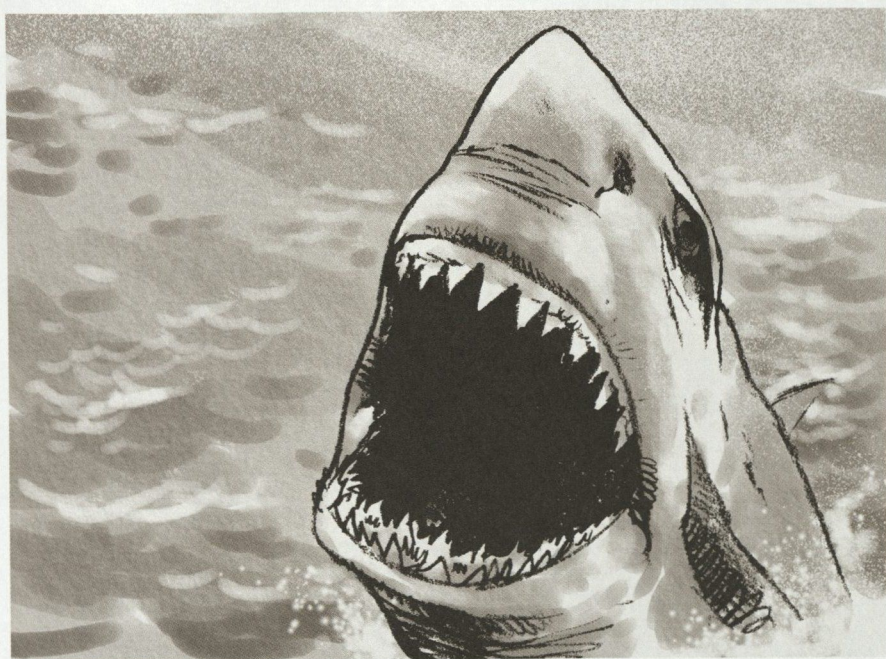






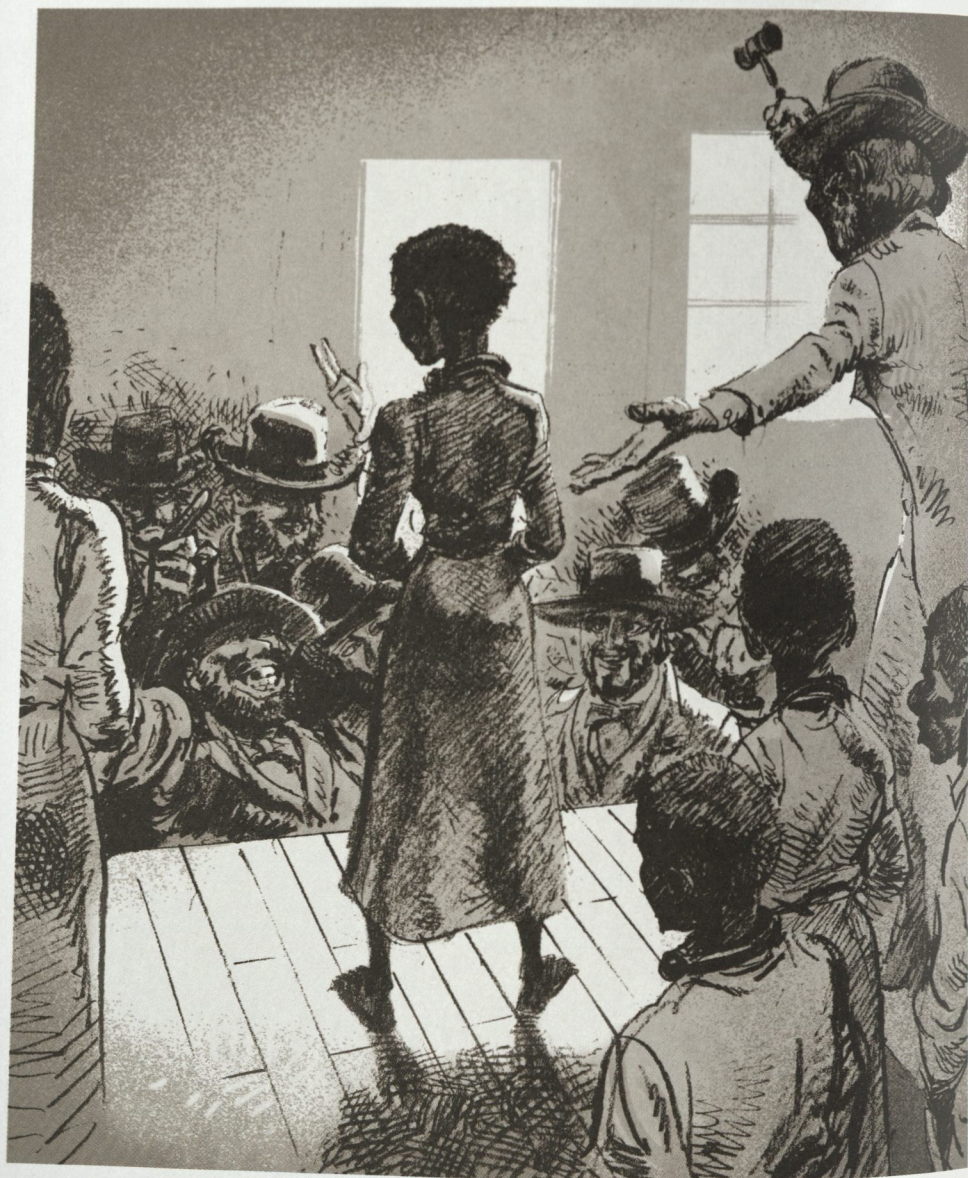












**FROM
THE CONFESSIONS
OF NAT TURNER**

"It is here necessary to relate this circumstance—trifling as it may seem, it was the commencement of that belief which has grown with time, and even now, sir, in this dungeon, helpless and forsaken as I am, I cannot divest myself of it. Being at play with other children, when three or four years old, I was telling them something which my mother, overhearing, said it had happened before I was born—I stuck to my story, however, and related some things which went, in her opinion, to confirm it—others being called on were greatly astonished, knowing that these things had happened, and caused them to say in my hearing, I surely would be a prophet, as the Lord had shown me things that had happened before my birth."

